

First Battle of
Lake Champlain.



CHAMPLAIN (SAMUEL D^e.)

THE

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OF

Lake Champlain.

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE

ALBANY INSTITUTE, NOVEMBER 5, 1889,

BY

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Plattsburgh Republican*

ALBANY:

AMASA J. PARKER, RECEIVER FOR WEED, PARSONS & CO., PRINTER.

1893.

Acc. No. 34634

THE FIRST BATTLE OF LAKE CHAMPLAIN.

HAS CURRENT HISTORY CORRECTLY LOCATED ITS SITE?

By GEORGE F. BIXBY.

[Read before the Albany Institute, November 5, 1889.]

The Champlain Valley has been famous as battle ground. The burden of the first tradition handed down from prehistoric time was of fierce wars which had driven their once numerous inhabitants from these shores and islands. Here, along the "gate of the country," was bloody ground, and it requires little effort of the imagination to conceive the tide of battle as ebbing and flowing past Rock Reggio, the ancient landmark between the savage tribes of the North and the South. The thought strikes one forcibly at the outset, in pursuing a line of inquiry like this, and comparing the old-world records with those of the new, the former reaching back to the earliest human races, that here darkness covers the face of that great deep; that the historic time of this valley spans but a comparative hand-breadth of the past — less than eight generations — and that it would be inexcusable if, even here, manifest errors bearing on important data should, without protest, be awarded a place on the pages of history.

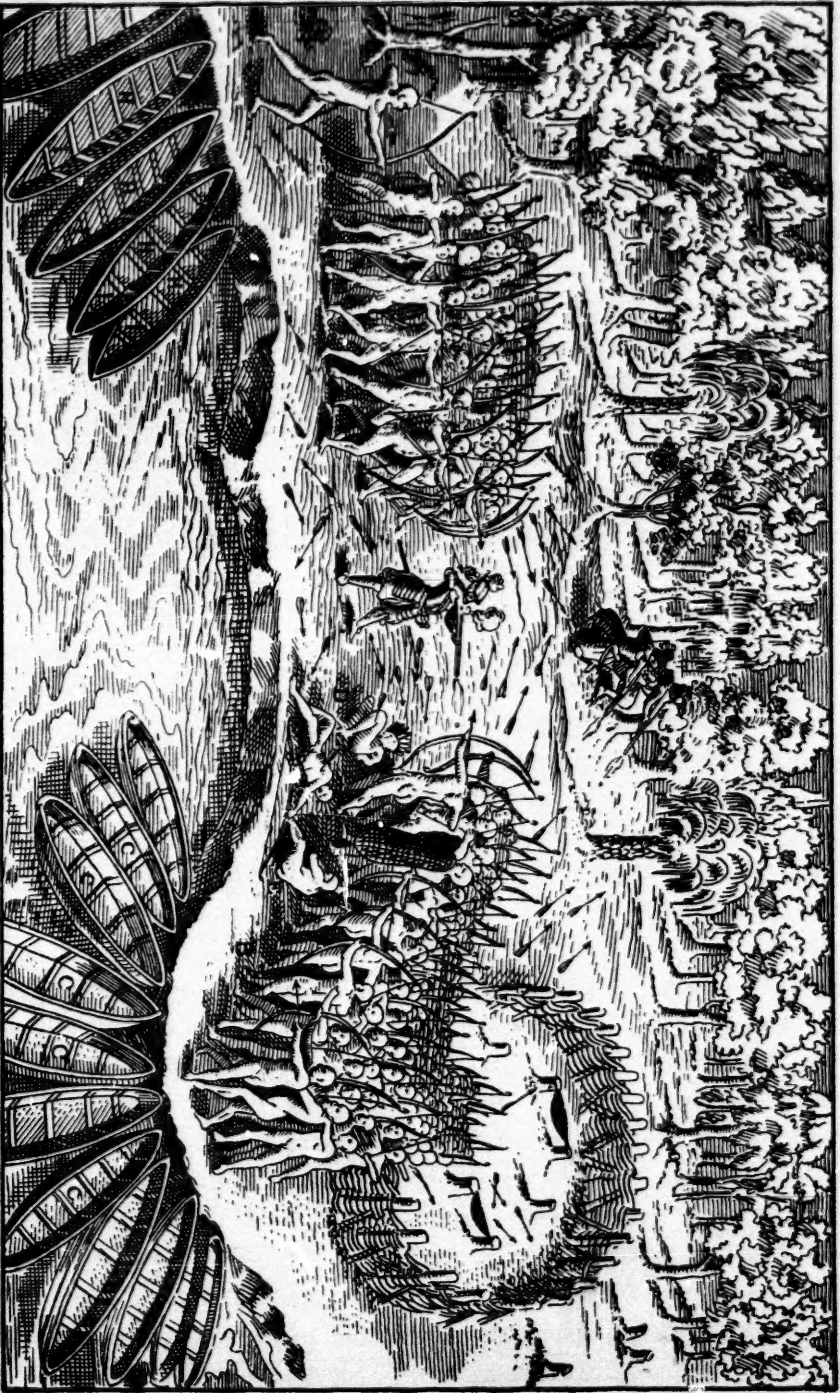
From the numerous conflicts of historic time on Lake Champlain, three stand out with marked distinctness. Seventy-five years ago in September, 1814, the last naval battle between the United States and the "Mother Country" was fought on Cumberland Bay, and thirty eight years before that, in October, 1776, was the first naval battle between the same powers, when the infant republic, under the lion-hearted Arnold, dared to stand up against the mistress of the seas on her own domain. The localities of both these engagements are well and truly marked; the first by the wreck of the *Royal Savage*, one of our own vessels sunk in that action, still visible at low water, and the last by well-attested charts, as well as by the recollection of living witnesses; and it is a remarkable fact that these two important battle grounds, where our first and last naval struggle with Great Britain took place, lie only five miles apart on Lake Champlain, without even a stone raised to commemorate them. The first of these three battles — standing on the outer verge of historic time — was the original "Battle of Lake Champlain," fought two hundred and eighty years

ago, only eighteen days after the discovery of this valley and its lake by Champlain, this probably being the first conflict, in what is now the State of New York, where firearms were used.

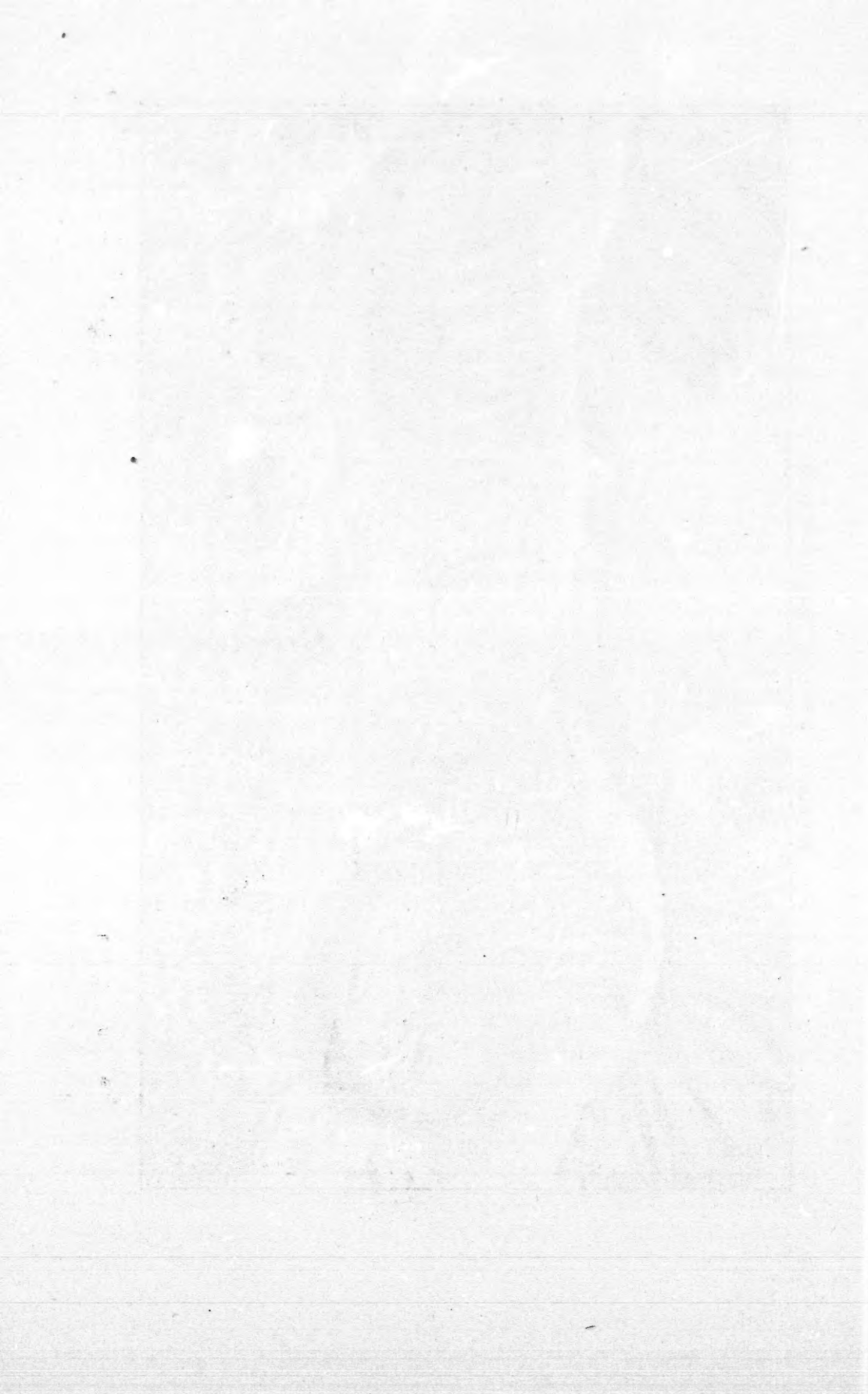
The site of this battle has also been fixed by current history, erroneously fixed, as I believe, and the purpose of this paper is to bring reasons for such belief. It will be remembered that Champlain was on his way through Lake Champlain, going south with a war party of Montagnais Indians against the Iroquois. The party consisted of Champlain and two other Frenchmen and sixty savages, with twenty-four birch bark canoes. They set out from the Fall of the Iroquois river, at Chambly Basin, on the 12th of July, 1609. Champlain in his Journal describes the journey up the river Richelieu and along the west side of the lake, and proceeds thus (Prince Society's translation):

"Now as we began to approach within two or three days' journey of the abode of their enemies we advanced only at night, resting during the day. * * * When it was evening we embarked in our canoes to continue our course and, as we advanced very quietly and without making any noise, we met on the 29th of July the Iroquois, about ten o'clock at evening, at the extremity of a cape which extends into the lake on the western bank (*au bout d'un cap qui avance dans le lac du costé d' l' Occident*). They had come to fight. We both began to utter loud cries, all getting their arms in readiness. We withdrew out on the water, and the Iroquois went on shore, where they drew up all their canoes close to each other and began to fell trees with poor axes, which they acquire in war sometimes, using also others of stone. Thus they barricaded themselves very well.

"Our forces also passed the entire night, their canoes being drawn up close to each other and fastened to poles, so that they might not get separated, and that they might be all in readiness to fight if occasion required. We were out upon the water, within arrow range of their barricades. When they were armed and in array, they despatched two canoes by themselves to the enemy to inquire if they wished to fight, to which the latter replied that they wanted nothing else: but they said that at present there was not much light, and that it would be necessary to wait for daylight so as to be able to recognize each other; and that as soon as the sun rose they would offer battle. This was agreed to by our side. Meanwhile, the entire night was spent in dancing and singing, on both sides, with endless insults and other talk; as, how little courage we had, how feeble a resistance we would make against their arms, and that, when day came, we should realize it to our ruin. Ours, also, were not slow in



THE FIRST BATTLE OF LAKE CHAMPLAIN.



retorting, telling them they would see such execution of arms as never before, together with an abundance of such as is not unusual in the siege of a town. After this singing, dancing and bandying of words on both sides to the fill, when day came my companions and myself continued under cover for fear that the enemy would see us. We arranged our arms in the best manner possible, being, however, separated, each in one of the canoes of the savage Montagnais.

“After arming ourselves with light armor, we each took an arquebuse and went on shore. I saw the enemy go out of their barricade, nearly two hundred in number, stout and rugged in appearance. They came at a slow pace towards us, with a dignity and assurance which greatly amused me, having three chiefs at their head. Our men also advanced in the same order, telling me that those who had three large plumes were the chiefs, and that they had only these three, and that they could be distinguished by these plumes which were much larger than those of their companions, and that I should do what I could to kill them. I promised to do all in my power, and said that I was very sorry they could not understand me, so that I might give order and shape to their mode of attacking their enemies, and then we should without doubt defeat them all; but that this could not now be obviated, and that I should be very glad to show them my courage and good will when we should engage in the fight.

“As soon as we had landed, they began to run for some two hundred paces toward their enemies, who stood firmly, not having as yet noticed my companions, who went into the woods with some savages. Our men began to call me with loud cries; and in order to give me a passage-way they opened in two parts, and put me at their head, where I marched some twenty paces in advance of the rest, until I was within about thirty paces of the enemy, who at once noticed me and, halting, gazed at me, as I did also at them. When I saw them making a move to fire at us, I rested my musket against my cheek and aimed directly at one of the three chiefs. With the same shot, two fell to the ground; and one of their men was so wounded that he died some time after. I had loaded my musket with four balls. When our side saw this shot, so favorable for them, they began to raise such loud cries that one could not have heard it thunder. Meanwhile, the arrows flew on both sides. The Iroquois were greatly astonished that two men had been so quickly killed, although they were equipped with armor woven from cotton thread and with wood, which was proof against their arrows. This caused great alarm among them. As I was loading again, one of my companions fired a

shot from the woods, which astonished them anew to such a degree that, seeing their chiefs dead, they lost courage and took to flight, abandoning their camp and fort and fleeing into the woods, whither I pursued them, killing still more of them, and took ten or twelve prisoners. The remainder escaped with the wounded. Fifteen or sixteen were wounded on our side with arrow shots, but they were soon healed.

“After gaining the victory our men amused themselves by taking a great quantity of Indian corn and some meal from their enemies; also their armor, which they had left behind that they might run better. After feasting sumptuously, dancing and singing, we returned three hours after with the prisoners. The spot where this attack took place is in latitude 43° and some minutes, and the lake was called Lake Champlain.”

In his explanation of the map accompanying his account of the battle, he says: “The canoes of the enemy were made of oak bark, each holding ten, fifteen or eighteen men.”

This is Champlain's account, in full, of the battle, and he says, farther on, that they returned down the lake eight leagues the same day and halted toward evening; also, that the Montagnais had scalped all those they had killed in battle.

Where is the “cape which extends into the lake on the western bank,” that Champlain describes as the scene of the first battle of Lake Champlain? Nearly all, if not quite all, authorities agree that it was at or near the spot where Fort Ticonderoga was afterward built, and where its ruins now stand. Watson says (Hist. Essex Co., p. 18): “The place was evidently in the vicinity of Ticonderoga.” Thompson (Hist. Vt., p. 2) locates the spot on the shore of Lake George. Palmer says (Hist. Lake Champlain, p. 22): “The engagement took place somewhere between Crown Point and Lake George, probably at Ticonderoga.” O'Callaghan (Doc. Hist. N. Y., vol. 3, p. 9, foot-note) says: “The reference in Champlain's map locates this engagement between Lake George and Crown Point, probably in what is now the town of Ticonderoga.” Brodhead (Hist. N. Y. vol. 1, p. 18) says: “On the map which accompanies his work, Champlain marks the place where the Iroquois were defeated as a promontory a little to the northeast of a small lake by which one goes to the Iroquois, after having passed Lake Champlain. These particulars seem to identify Ticonderoga as the spot where the first encounter took place between the white men and the red men on the soil of

New York." Slafter, in his memoir of Champlain, published by the Prince Society, locates the battle at Ticonderoga, and argues at some length in support of that view.

This is a strong array of authorities which it may be presumptuous to question, but attention is called to a few plain facts bearing on the matter. Champlain's maps, his picture of the battle and his Journal, together with the natural conformation of the western shore of the lake, are the chief points of interest in the case.

First, as to the map referred to above. This is Champlain's great map of New France, drawn by his own hand, and upon which are delineated the results of his discoveries and observations in the New World during his travels and sojournings, covering a period of over twenty-five years, from 1603 to 1629, along the Atlantic coast from the Gulf of St. Lawrence as far south as Cape Cod and, perhaps, to Martha's Vineyard, along the coast of Labrador, through New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and the Eastern provinces of Canada, up the Saguenay river, through the St. Lawrence to the foot of the Cascades at the head of Lake St. Francis, up the Ottawa river to Lake Nipissing, and through the Georgian Bay, Lake Simcoe, to Lake Ontario, Oneida Lake and Lake Champlain. This map and his journals were made in obedience to the orders of King Henry IV, and the testimony of both map and journals is entitled to the utmost weight. Champlain says in his dedication to the king: "This I do feeling myself urged by a just sense of the honor I have received during the last ten years in commissions, not only, sire, from your majesty but also from the late king, Henry the Great, of happy memory who commissioned me to make the most exact researches and explorations in my power. This I have done, and added, moreover, the maps." To the Queen Regent, showing his sense of religious obligation, he speaks of his explorations in America, "Where I have always desired to see the Lily flourish, and also the only religion, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman."

On this great map Lake Champlain appears with its islands and rivers and outlines, drawn as near to nature as one might expect from data gathered during one trip through it with a war-party of savages. On the west side, three rivers, only, are marked on this map north of the outlet of Lake George. It will be remembered that Champlain traveled up the lake on the west side, and very slowly, taking seventeen days from Chambly Basin to reach the scene of the battle — only about seven miles a day. Here, then, on this western shore, if anywhere, we may certainly expect accurate mapping, and, more especially,

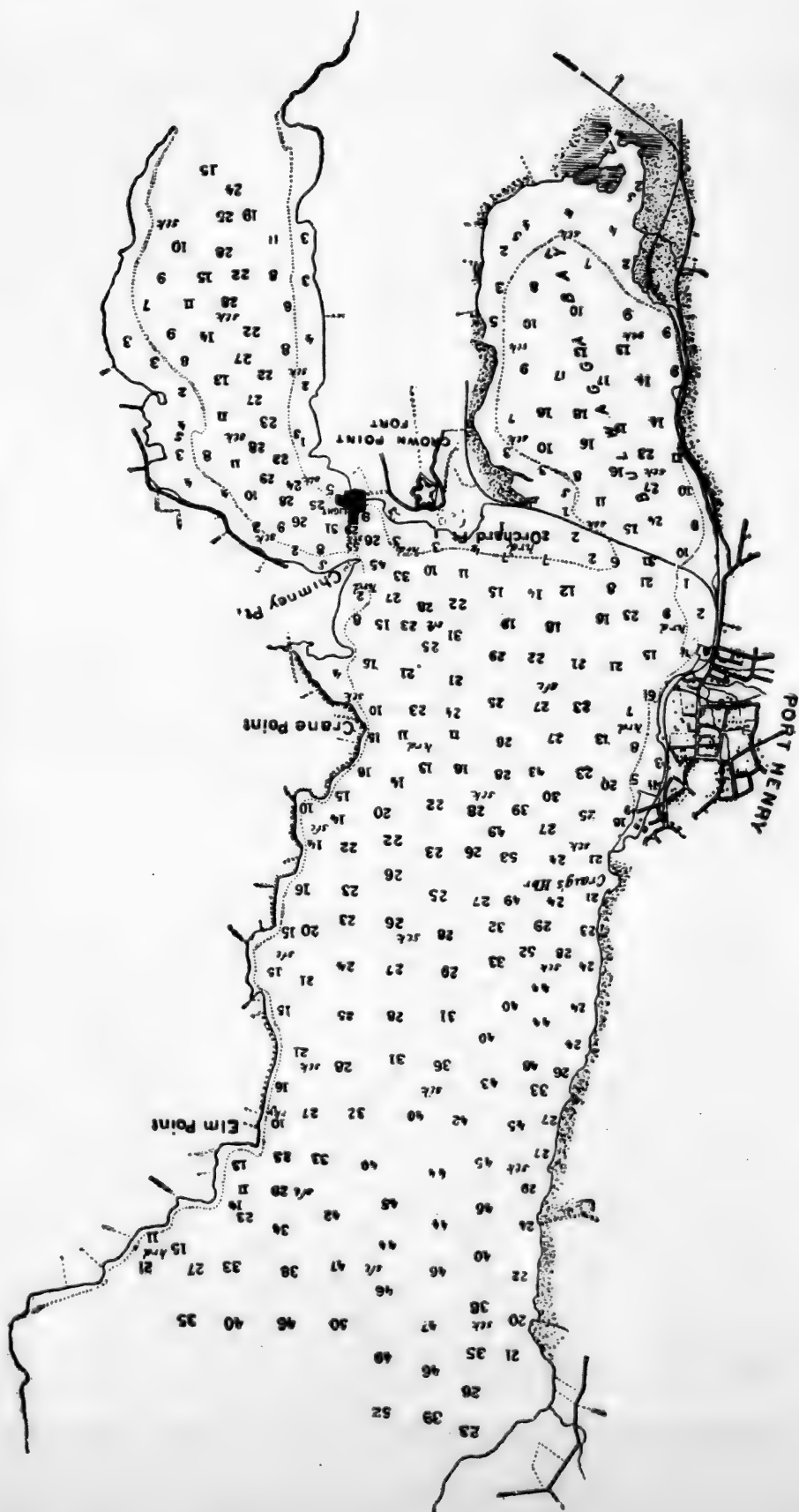
when it is remembered that Champlain distinguished this lake above all other localities which he discovered or explored, by giving it his own name.

What three rivers are these which he marks? He would hardly have missed the Great Chazy river, with its broad estuary, for the most northerly one. Going southward he would naturally pass the hidden mouth of the Saranac river, three miles westward from Cumberland Head, across Cumberland Bay, and he might easily have missed it, as he did the mouth of the Merrimack in passing down the Atlantic coast in 1605. The Great Ausable river he could hardly have failed of seeing, and he must, undoubtedly, have seen the Boquet river, which has the appearance at its mouth of being the largest of the three mentioned, although it is the smallest. The three rivers, then, which Champlain marked for the west side of the lake were, probably, the Chazy, the Ausable, and the Boquet, there being no river between the most southerly one, the Boquet, and Ticonderoga at the outlet of Lake George. On his map Champlain marked the "cape which extends into the lake on the western side," very distinctly, and placed by it the figure 65, referring to his explanation of this as "the place on Lac Champlain where the Iroquois were defeated." Now this cape, the only one marked on the western side of the lake on Champlain's map, is represented on that map as being about equi-distant from Lake George and the southernmost of the three rivers, the Bonquet, which is about forty-five miles north of the outlet of Lake George, or Ticonderoga; Crown Point being between these points, about fourteen miles north from Ticonderoga. The testimony of the map, then, seems conclusive against the hypothesis that the battle was at Ticonderoga, which lies directly at the outlet of Lake George.

We next come to the Journal of Champlain, and his description of the scene of the battle: "The extremity of a cape which extends into the lake on the western bank." Now, there is no spot in the vicinity of Ticonderoga or between Crown Point and Ticonderoga which answers to this description, the little jutting points along that shore having no resemblance to capes extending into the lake.

The place which has been designated as the scene of the battle is about half a mile north of Fort Ticonderoga. Here the shore trends to the southeast for a short distance, but there is no cape there. The water there is shallow all along the shore, being marked on the United States Coast Survey as only six inches deep, and it will be readily seen that the heavy oak bark canoes of the Iroquois, each carrying ten to eighteen persons could not have landed there.

FROM U. S. COAST SURVEY — SHOWING CROWN POINT.



Thirdly, we come to Champlain's picture of the battle, drawn by himself. In this he represents the savages of both sides, Champlain being at the head of his party of Canadian Indians on the left, and the Iroquois on the right, while well around on the right flank of the Iroquois, and on higher ground than they, are Champlain's two white companions. Now, if the battle was at Ticonderoga, we must assume that Champlain and his party voluntarily threw themselves to the southward of their enemies, towards the enemy's country, in an unknown wilderness, the two white companions putting themselves in even greater peril than the main force, and this with their foes outnumbering them more than three to one. Is it possible to believe that Champlain would commit this mistake, familiar as he was with the wily tactics of the savages? Is it probable that the warlike Montagnais would thus have voluntarily put themselves at this disadvantage, after having already penetrated with extreme caution over a hundred miles into the enemy's country?

The Iroquois landed first, and Champlain and his party had their choice whether to attack from the left or the right. Can it be reasonably supposed that they would have chosen to give battle from the south, where the danger to themselves was certainly greater than if they attacked from the north? The evidence of the journal, of the map, and of the battle picture — all the work of Champlain himself — appears to combat the supposition that the battle could have been fought at Ticonderoga.

Where then was it fought?

I believe all the reliable evidence in the case points to Crown Point, where the French erected Fort Frederick, their extreme outpost in 1731, the ruins of which, with enclosing earthworks, are still visible near the northern shore, while farther inland stand the stone barracks of the Amherst fort.

Here is a locality which perfectly answers to Champlain's description of "a cape which extends into the lake on the western bank," and here is the only spot, at the extremity of the cape, and thence around to the head of Bay St. Frederick, as the French named it, now Bullwagga Bay, where the western shore trends to the northward, and the only spot on the western side of that part of Lake Champlain, where a skilled warrior like Champlain, and savages like his allies, would have been likely to attack their foes from the left and north, rather than from the right and south. In fact this is the only point along the entire west shore of Lake Champlain where the shore line takes a northerly direction, with the exception of Willsborough Point,

about thirty miles north of Crown Point, where the shore is a precipitous bluff. Crown Point also corresponds with Champlain's map. Take the United States Coast Survey of the lake and reduce it to the scale of Champlain's map, and Crown Point stands out as distinctly beyond the general shore line as does the cape which is marked on Champlain's map, as the location of the battle, and Crown Point also approximates in position to this cape, marked on Champlain's map as between Ticonderoga and the Boquet river.

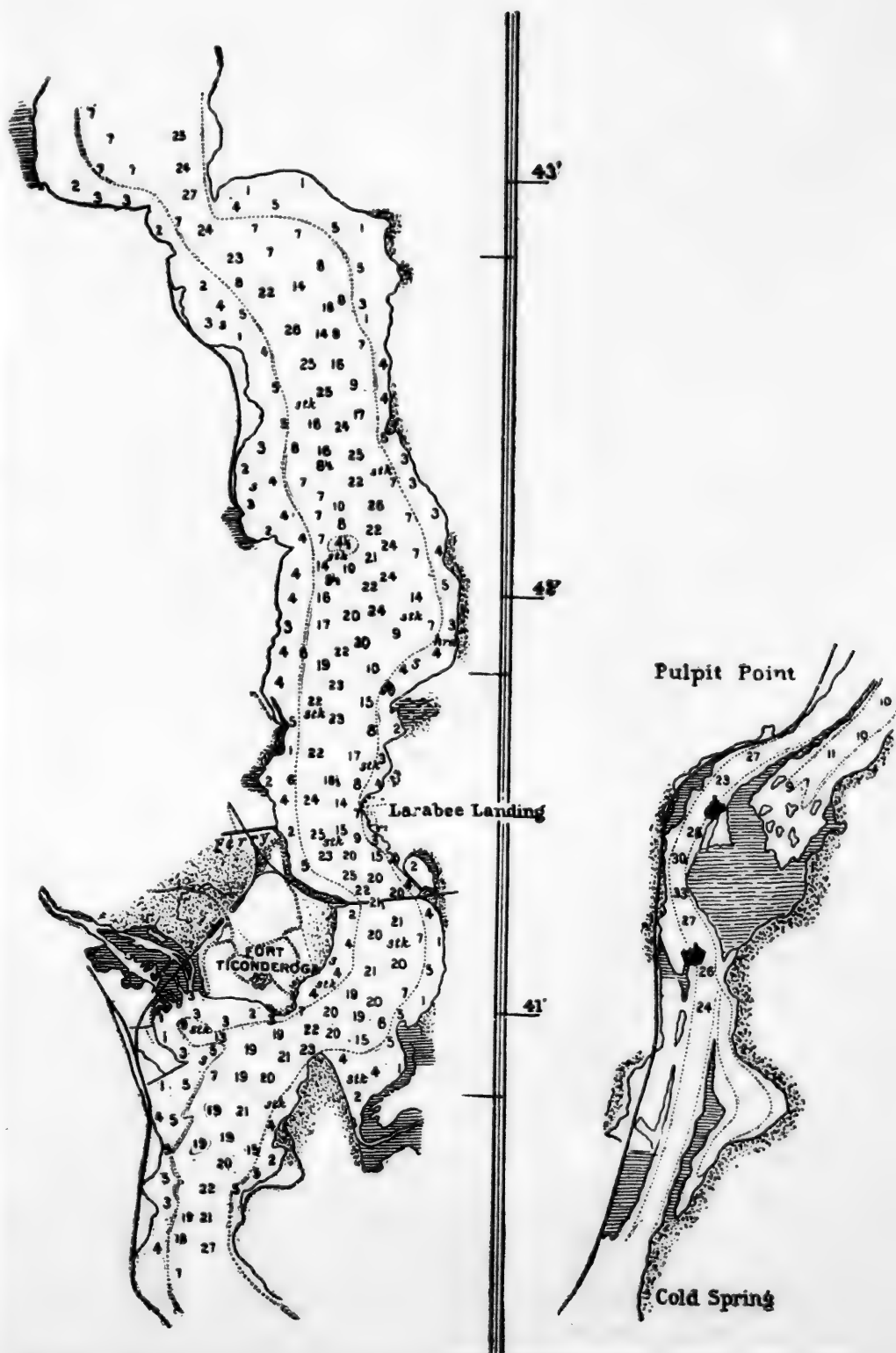
Again, all the old French maps marked Bullwagga Bay, the shore of which terminates in Crown Point, as the head of Lake Champlain, and that portion southward as Wood Creek. The lake above this point certainly partakes more of the character of a river than a lake, especially from Crown Point to Ticonderoga, being but a little over a mile wide in the entire distance of fourteen miles, while at some points it is only a third of a mile wide. Is it possible that so close an observer as Champlain, acting under his king's command, would have neglected to mention this remarkable change in the contour of the lake, had he traversed this portion, or that he would not have called it a river, as he called the outlet a river as far south as Rouses Point or Windmill Point, although that outlet for thirty miles below Rouses Point averages nearly or quite as wide as does this part of the lake between Crown Point and Ticonderoga?

The fact that on his map no indication appears of this remarkable narrowing of the lake into a river certainly affords good basis for the assumption that he never saw this portion of the lake, and that Crown Point was the southern limit of his exploration of Lake Champlain. Mark in this connection Champlain's language already quoted: "The spot where this attack took place was in latitude 43° and some minutes, and the lake was called Lake Champlain." Thus the evidence of the journal and the map and the battle picture indicate that Crown Point, and not Ticonderoga, was the scene of the battle.

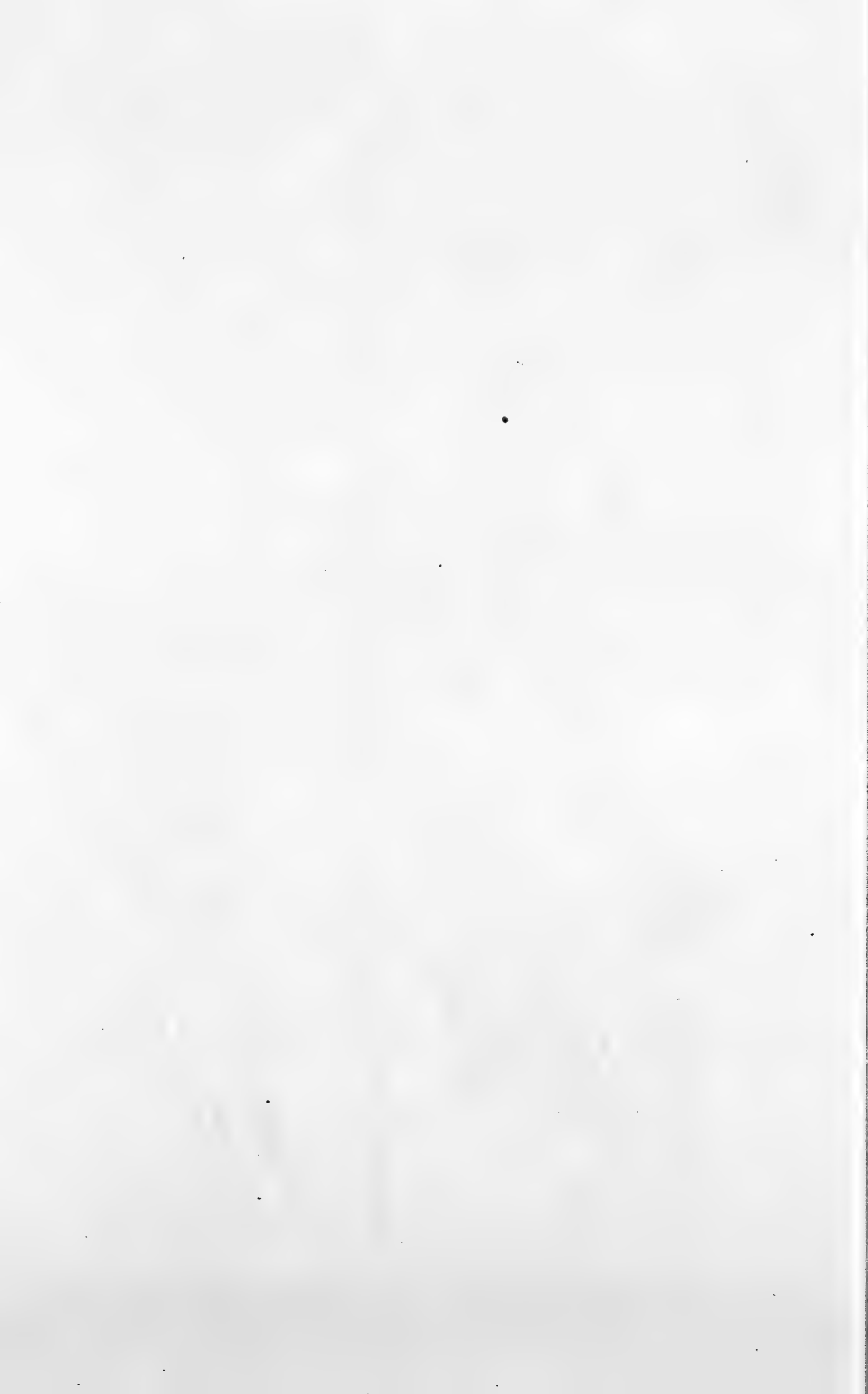
What basis to rest upon, then, has the assumption, so universally concurred in by historical authorities, that the battle was at Ticonderoga or above Crown Point?

First, Champlain says, in his journal: "The spot where this attack took place is in latitude 43° and some minutes." Now, if the latitude is correctly given by him there is an end of all controversy, as Crown Point lies in latitude $44^{\circ} 2'$, while the point where current history has fixed the battle is in latitude $43^{\circ} 51'$.

How did Champlain determine the latitude? He undoubtedly did it with the astrolabe, and it is a remarkable circumstance that an in-



FROM U. S. COAST SURVEY—SHOWING TICONDEROGA AND COAST NORTHWARD.



strument was picked up in 1867, on one of Champlain's portages of 1613 in the township of Ross, County Renfrew, in the province of Ontario, bearing the date of 1603, which good authorities concur in believing to be Champlain's astrolabe. The instrument is described by Mr. A. J. Russell, the author of a *brochure* published in 1879, entitled, "Champlain's Astrolabe, lost on the 7th of June, 1613, and found in August, 1867," as a circular brass plate, having a diameter of five inches and five-eighths. He says: "It is of plate brass, very dark with age, one-eighth of an inch thick above, increasing to six-sixteenths of an inch below, to give it steadiness when suspended, which apparently was intended to be increased by hanging a weight on a little projecting ring at the bottom of it, in using it on shipboard. Its suspending ring is attached by a double hinge of the nature of a universal joint. Its circle is divided into single degrees, graduated from its perpendicular of suspension. The double-bladed index, the pivot of which passes through the centre of the astrolabe, has slits and eyelets in the projecting sights that are on it." The manner of using the astrolabe is described thus: "Let the astrolabe be suspended so that it shall hang plumb. Direct the index to the sun at noon, or to the North star, so that the same ray of light may shine through both holes in the two tablets or pinules on the index, and the index will point to the degree of the sun's meridian altitude, indicated on the outer rim of the astrolabe."

It will be observed from the description that the entire span of the graduated circle is less than eighteen inches, and that consequently the length of each degree as marked upon it is less than one-twentieth of an inch. When this is taken into consideration, together with the fact that Champlain's observations were made while surrounded by a war-party of savages, in an enemy's country, with but little leisure, it would not be strange if he made an error. As a matter of fact his records of latitude throughout his explorations are now definitely known to be full of errors, notwithstanding most of them were made under far more favorable circumstances than these on Lake Champlain.

Thus, in Champlain's first exploration in Canada in 1604, he marked the harbor of St. Margaret, now Weymouth Harbor, on the southern shore of St. Mary's Bay, as in latitude $45^{\circ} 30'$ an error of $1^{\circ} 7'$, the true latitude being $44^{\circ} 23'$. The true latitude of the Island of St. Croix is $45^{\circ} 37'$ and he made it $46^{\circ} 40'$, an error of $1^{\circ} 3'$. He made a point in the Richelieu river north of Chambly Basin in latitude 45° , an error of some $45'$. To a well-marked cove in Moisie Bay

he gave the latitude of "51° and some minutes," an error of at least 41'. The Basin of Mines, La Cadie, which he puts in latitude "44° and some minutes," has a latitude of 45° 30', an error of 90 nautical miles. The latitude of Bangor, Me., is 44° 46', and he made it 45° 25'. Ward Island, at the mouth of the Saco, which he placed in latitude 43° 45', has a latitude of 43° 27'. He made the latitude of Cape Ann "43° and some minutes," and its true latitude is 42° 39' 43". Brant's Point, near Boston, he placed in latitude 42° 45', an error of 40'. Nauset Harbor, Cape Cod, was placed by him in latitude 42°, an error of 12', and in giving the latitude of Ten Pound Island, Gloucester Bay, he made an error of 24'. The nearest approximation to exactness in all Champlain's records is in giving the latitude of Port Sainte Helaine as 44° 41', "more or less," an error of only one minute, his usual variation being from 10' to 30' or more. In fact, it would be remarkable if it were otherwise, considering the rudeness of his appliances and the probability that no allowance was made for refraction.

Now, Crown Point being in latitude 44° 2', and Ticonderoga, which has been accepted as the site of the battle, in latitude 43° 51', the error in this case would be only 11', or far below Champlain's average, allowing that the battle ground was at Crown Point, in latitude 44° 2', instead of at Ticonderoga in latitude "43° and some minutes."

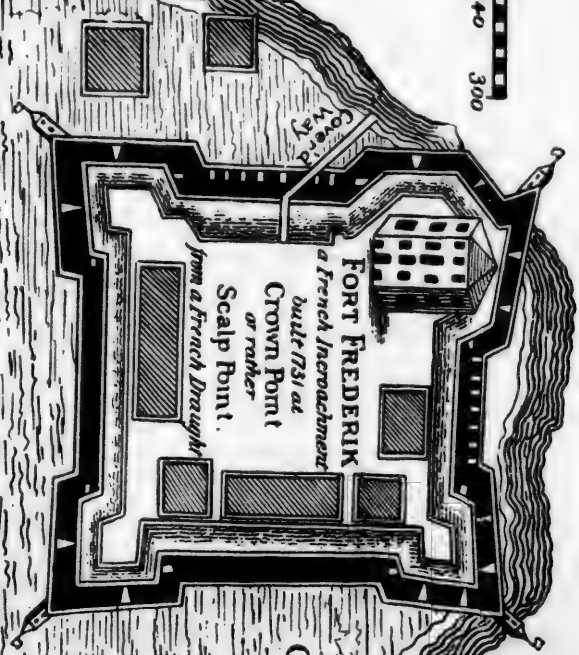
There is another expression in Champlain's journal, which, with that just considered, evidently constitutes the foundation of the hypothesis that the first Battle of Lake Champlain was at or near Ticonderoga.

Champlain in the narration of this voyage, detailing occurrences of several days before the battle, speaking of the mountains to the southward, says: "The savages told me that these mountains were thickly settled, and that it was there we were to find their enemies; but that it was necessary to pass a fall in order to go there, (which I saw afterward) when we should enter another lake nine or ten leagues long," etc. Champlain here, undoubtedly, refers to Lake George, and to the fall below its outlet, which now furnishes water power for the manufacturing village of Ticonderoga, and it has been argued that he must have seen this fall on the day of the battle, there being no reason for believing that he ever returned to this locality, and, consequently, that the battle must have been as near to this fall as the point on the shore where it has been located — a distance of something over two miles.

Now, it will be remembered that, in his narrative of events of July 30, he says, the Iroquois, "seeing their chiefs dead, lost courage and took to flight, abandoning their camp and fort and fleeing into the

PART of IROQUOIS LAKE

Scale of Feet



WOOD CREEK

SCALP POINT.

woods, whither I pursued them, killing still more of them. Our savages also killed several of them and took ten or twelve prisoners. * * * After gaining the victory our men amused themselves by taking a great quantity of Indian corn and some meal from their enemies, also their armor. After feasting sumptuously, dancing and singing, we returned, three hours after with the prisoners," and "after going some eight leagues, toward evening, they took one of the prisoners," etc., and he proceeds to detail the scenes of torture in the camp. The day had witnessed the battle, the sack of the fort and camp, the dancing and singing and feasting and, finally, the journey of eight leagues, and still it was only "toward evening." No hint is given of any extended pursuit of the Iroquois through the dense wilderness and, with so much crowded into the day, there could have been little time for such pursuit. To have seen the falls of Ticonderoga Champlain must have gone some two miles from the spot which has been fixed by historians as the battle-ground, burdened with his heavy arquebuse, abandoning his base of supplies, and plunging into an unknown wilderness in pursuit of a fleet and unincumbered foe, which still outnumbered his own force, nearly or quite three to one, and exposing himself to the danger of a deadly ambushade. What object could he have had in incurring this danger? Did he see these falls on the day of the battle? Is it probable that he saw them then and neglected to mention this significant fact in its proper place in his journal?

This was one of his most important and most perilous voyages of discovery. He had penetrated over a hundred miles into the enemy's country, and may it not be fairly presumed that, here, at the end of that journey he would have noted on the day of its occurrence so remarkable a circumstance as this? Note the expression, "which I saw afterwards." In the Prince Society's translation this phrase is in parenthesis. Why? Did the translator have doubts or suspicions of it? It would seem so, else so important an expression would not have been thus slighted. It might prove an interesting study to trace the history of this phrase, so significantly cut out from the main narrative and parenthetically degraded by the translator. Are there grounds for the suspicion that it may be an interpolation?

At the time of Champlain's explorations, two religious orders in the Catholic church were struggling with each other for precedence, not only in the Old World but in this great missionary field just opened in the New World. The Récollets came over with Columbus in 1493 and were in Canada in 1615, and their rivals, the Jesuits, were here even before that, and were firmly established in New France in 1633.

Mr. Otis, in his preface to his translation of Champlain's journals hints at tampering with the journals of Champlain, (vol. 1, p. 220) and says: "All favorable allusion to the Récollets, to whom Champlain was friendly, are modified or expunged in editions subsequent to the first, while the Jesuits are made to appear in a more favorable light." This is, at least, suggestive of the key to a possible motive for precisely such an interpolation as this, based on the desired establishment of the alleged fact that Champlain, an adherent of the Récollets, and so zealous a Catholic that he might almost be ranked as a missionary as well as explorer,¹ was the first discoverer of Lake George, or its outlet, thirty-five years before it was seen by Father Jogues, whom history names as the first white man who saw it. A suggestive fact may be stated in this connection — that on Champlain's small map of 1613 ("Geographical Map of New France, in its True Meridian") a cross is marked on Lake George, indicating pretension to discovery or possession by Catholic missionaries thirty-one years before its discovery by Father Jogues.

The language of the phrase in parenthesis is at least ambiguous. The Indians told him "It was necessary to pass a fall to go there, (which I saw afterwards)." What did he see? Literally, Champlain did not say that he saw the fall, afterwards, but that afterwards he saw it was necessary to pass the fall. It seems probable that what he meant was that he perceived, or found, or became convinced, that one must pass the fall to go to the lake; that he verified what the friendly savages had told him. This he might have done through the Iroquois prisoners, of whom his party had taken ten or twelve, and it is reasonable to suppose that he would obtain what information he could from them.

The language leaves a doubt as to its author's meaning, and in judging of it all circumstances bearing upon the matter should be taken into consideration. It is undeniable that all the other evidence in the case forbids the supposition that Champlain could have seen the fall on the day of battle, even had it been fought at Ticonderoga or near there. In many other instances the language of Champlain's journals is doubtful and susceptible of double meaning. Thus, in the journal of his voyage of 1603, he speaks of a "horrible monster * * * which the savages called the Gougou * * * This monster makes horrible noises in this island which the savages call Gougou," etc. Here he evidently means that the monster is called Gougou, but construed literally he says the savages call the island "Gougou." Again, in his explanation of his great map, he describes the Richelieu river as "very beautiful, with many islands and meadows. It comes

from Lac de Champlain, five or six days' journey in length," etc., leaving it uncertain whether it is the lake or the river which he is describing. And once more, he says: "Having asked whence comes the river Norumbegue, he told me that it passes the fall, and that one journeying some distance on it enters a lake by way of which they come to the river of St. Croix," etc. Here Champlain could not, as his translator points out, have meant the river St. Croix, but rather the river in which was the island of St. Croix. Many such instances might be cited from Champlain's journals. Mr. Charles Pomeroy Otis, the translator of the Prince Society's edition of Champlain's voyages, says: "The language used by Champlain is essentially the classic French of Henry IV. * * * But, though using in general the language of court and literature, he offends, not unfrequently, against the rules of grammar and logical arrangement. * * * Indeed, one rather wonders that an unpretending explorer writes so well. It is the thought, not the words, which occupies his attention."

It is proper to note here that while, previously to the battle, Champlain gives dates in his journal, none are given after the battle, until the war party arrives at Quebec, the first date noted being the 8th of September, thirty-nine days after the battle, and that it is possible, though altogether improbable, that he might have returned and seen the fall during this time, before leaving the lake.

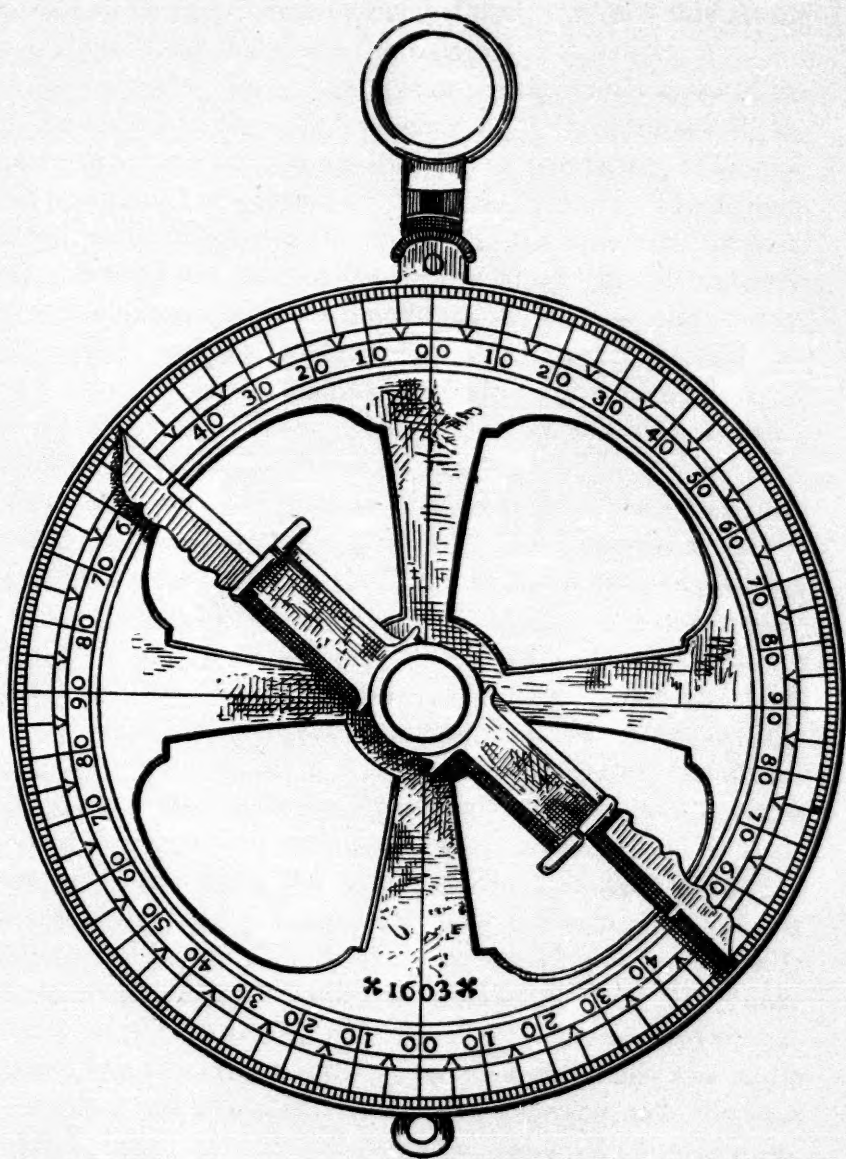
There is one more important consideration. The old Indian name for Crown Point was "Ten'yadoughnigaugee," which signified "two points opposite to each other." (See map accompanying Pownall's Topographical Description, 1776.) When the French assumed ownership of Lake Champlain, they discarded nearly all the Indian names, substituting their own. This point they called Point au Chevelure. What did that name signify? An old plan or chart of Fort Frederick, preserved in the library archives of a New England town, gives a clue.

It represents Crown Point, with Fort Frederick, its tall tower armed with cannon, and ground plans of the small church and other buildings, within the earthwork enclosure, and it bears title, "Ft. Frederick, a French Incroachment, built 1731 at Crown Point, or rather Scalp Point. From a French draft." This plan bears neither date nor other explanation, but the phrase "French Incroachment," marks it as of English origin, and of course it must have been drawn before 1759, when the fort was destroyed and the country was relinquished by the French. On this copy of a "French Draft," Point au Chevelure, or Crown Point, or Scalp Point, is marked as the southern limit of Lake

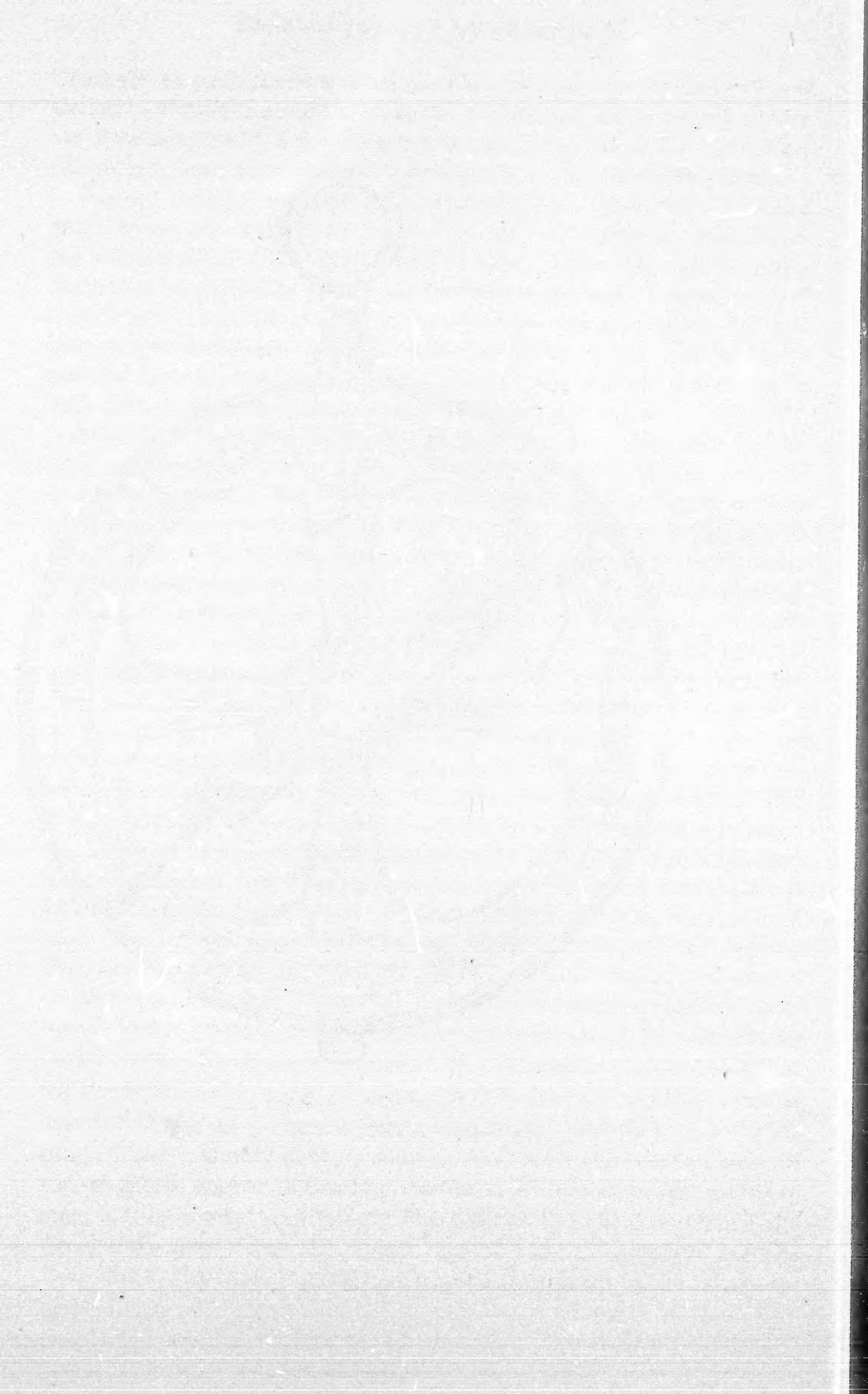
Champlain and the narrow continuation of it above is marked "Wood Creek." Now it is a most significant fact that on all, or nearly all the old French maps of Lake Champlain this point bears the name "au Chevelure," or "Scalp Point," as rendered by this plan referred to.

Whence came that name so indicative of bloody work? It is the only name on these old maps of Lake Champlain that bears such signification. We find Point au Fer, Point Algonquin, Cape Scamoton as applied to prominent features below, and "Cheonderoga," signifying "Three Rivers," which is now Ticonderoga, where we have been taught to believe the battle was, but nowhere on any of these maps of Lake Champlain is there a name except this which appears to have been applied to commemorate bloodshed or warfare.

Now the first Battle of Lake Champlain was a notable event in the early annals of this region. The first discharge of Champlain's arquebuse awoke new echoes which heralded the end of savage dominion and the advent of civilization, with its better modes of living and of killing. Is it likely that the early French chroniclers with their habits of careful observation of the minutest things would have omitted to hand down the memory of that first battle of Frenchmen with savages? Or is it probable that they would have applied a name indicating Indian warfare to a point where no notable act of Indian warfare took place and give to the only bloody spot the peaceful name of "Three Rivers?" In that battle about two hundred and sixty men were engaged—a great force for that time, when the lines of transportation were wilderness trails and fleets were made from the bark of trees. The first naval battle between England and the United States had only about four times that number of men engaged, and the last naval battle between these powers had less than two thousand men. In this first battle of Lake Champlain the force of the Iroquois was nearly decimated, and many scalps were taken—a feature of warfare strange to civilized Frenchmen. What can be more likely than that the scene of such a conflict, which has had no parallel in significance since, on these waters, would be appropriately named, and what name could be more fitting than Point au Chevelure or Scalp Point? It seems hardly probable that the site of this battle would go unnamed, with such a minute and graphic description of it as Champlain spread out on the historic annals of that time. They certainly gave no point above this on the lake, a name, in the slightest degree indicating warfare. Ticonderoga, as we have seen, is from a word signifying "Three Rivers"—the river from Lake George, the river from the upper end of Lake Champlain, and the East Creek, the three joining here and flowing down to the lake, con-



CHAMPLAIN'S ASTROLABE.
Lost June 7, 1613; found August, 1867.



stituting Wood Creek, named also "Ossavages" on one old map? All other points on the west side of the lake where the battle could have possibly taken place are left nameless on the old French maps except Point au Chevelure, Crown Point, or Scalp Point. Is not this strong presumptive evidence that there was the battle?

Champlain, in his rude map of Lake Champlain, plainly marked the "cape which extends into the lake," placing by it the number 65, referring to his explanation of this as the site of the battle, this cape being the most prominent projection on the western shore. The French map-makers, following him, gave the outline of the lake with remarkable accuracy, and they too marked the "cape which extends into the lake," and gave it a name which commemorates bloodshed, and to-day, no observant traveler, following Champlain's course up the lake can fail to be struck with Crown Point as answering more completely to Champlain's description of the site of his battle than any other locality where the battle could have possibly been fought.

All along down the course of historic time Crown Point has been noted as one of the grand strategic points of the Champlain valley. Here an outpost was established by the English in colonial times, near the close of the seventeenth century; here, in 1731, the French built Fort Frederick, making a bold advance from their former frontier a hundred miles north; from this point the great military road was built across the mountains to the Connecticut; here, under the guns of Fort Frederick, was the first church in the Champlain valley, the Jesuit Fathers planting the cross beside the French lily according to their custom, as if in obedience to Champlain's desire; here the walls of the great Amherst fort — said to be the most massive and best preserved of all the Revolutionary or pre-Revolutionary military ruins of the North — began to rise in the very month that the French were finally driven out of the valley; here, doubtless, at the head of the "lake which is the gate of the country," was the scene of many bloody encounters between the two great nations of savages before the white men came; here, the best evidence concurs in showing, was the spot where the Iroquois built the first fort since the dawn of historic time, in the Champlain valley, on the night of July 29th, two hundred and eighty years ago, and here, on the morning of the 30th of July, 1609, was fought the first Battle of Lake Champlain.

(1) He (Champlain) was upright and amiable in his deportment — was zealous in propagating the Roman Catholic faith, and was often heard to remark that "The salvation of one soul was of more value than the conquest of an empire." — (Thompson's Vermont, Part 2, p. 2, foot-note.)

(2) Map accompanying Pownall's Topographical Description 1776.